

Commissioner's Message



Commissioner Mick Keelty, APM

There is no doubt that the tragic deaths of Federal Agents Mark Scott and Brice Steele have had a profound impact on everyone in the AFP.

Both men, in their own way, had made a significant contribution to the organisation and had a wide range of friends and colleagues who will mourn their loss.

The personal impact on the direct family and friends of both men is imponderable and I once again offer my personal condolences to both families. The following pages of *Platypus Magazine* convey the deep respect in which Mark and Brice were held and we feel privileged that the families of both men allowed the AFP to provide the formal honour of a police funeral.

Our thoughts are also with the families of the other 19 victims of the air crash on 7 March in Yogyakarta, Indonesia,

particularly the other three Australians, who were all engaged in various ways in the service of their country and, indirectly, in the service of the people of Indonesia.

Mark and Brice proved a formidable combination. Brice as manager AFP Indonesia and one of our most senior officers working outside Australia, brought an intellect and humility to the task that inspired confidence from his team and the Indonesian authorities he liaised with.

Mark brought to the task a wealth of experience in community policing in the Australian and international arena and was a man easily identified as a police officer keenly interested in the community he served.

It was this commitment to the service of others that saw both men in the situation they found themselves in, and we respect them for that.

They will live long in our memories and indeed in the memories of the many people who personally sent condolence messages to my office. A selection of those messages is published in the following pages.

Outgoing Minister for Justice and Customs Chris Ellison has also made a contribution to this edition, commenting on the loss of Mark and Brice, but also recalling the achievements of the members of the AFP during his time as Minister.

It sometimes takes such a reflection to point out just how much we have achieved individually and together during the past six years. In that time the AFP

has grown from around 2,500 to 5,500 police, protection officers and staff, witnessing significantly the establishment of the International Deployment Group and the extensive expansion of our organisation during the time Senator Ellison has served as the AFP's Minister.

In December and recently in March, Senator Ellison personally took part in two significant policing functions – the sod turning ceremony at the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) and a function at the AFP College recognising the service given by Shane Castles and Andy Hughes to Pacific policing, both of which feature in this edition.

The redevelopment of the AIPM will ensure the continuation of the world-class police management training provided by the Institute, while the high level of commitment to duty demonstrated by Shane and Andy will remain a benchmark for those who find themselves performing their duties under difficult circumstances.

Service to the community can be a difficult business and as we have seen recently, it can have unexpected and devastating consequences. I grant you, it has not been the best start to the year, but if anything can be taken from recent events, it is that as an organisation, we have a new benchmark of dedication and performance to inspire us all.

Finally, we would like to welcome Senator David Johnston as our new Minister for Justice and Customs.

M. J. Keelty APM